CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Jordan
ST D-3/2

(10)

May 15, 1953
9:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Jordan

PLACE : Office of the Foreign Minister, Amman

PARTICIPANTS: United States
Mr. Harold E. Stassen
Mr. Douglas MacArthur
Mr. Henry A. Byroade
Mr. M. E. Mattison
Mr. Andrew G. Lynch
Mr. Tracy R. Walling

Jordan
His Excellency Dr. Hussein Khalidy, Foreign Minister

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY WOLF JR. DATE 5/25/82
RDS
TS AUTH. _____ REASON(S) _____
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED☒ RELEASABLE☒
RELEASE DENIED☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS _____

After the usual exchange of compliments Mr. Stassen explained to the Foreign Minister that the primary purpose of the Secretary's visit, and his visit was, insofar as possible in the short time at their disposal, to learn of the problems of the countries they were passing through. The Foreign Minister, Dr. Hussein Khalidy, then embarked on a resumé of the political situation as between Jordan, the Arab states and Israel. He went back, with apologies, to 1920 and he explained how over the years the Arabs of Palestine had seen their doom approaching. They had known quite well the fate in store for them and had repeatedly warned the Mandatory power that Jewry was determined to establish a national State in Palestine. Their fears had been repeatedly ridiculed. They had had figures thrown at them which were designed to show that the immigration of Jews into Palestine was more than taken care of by the natural increase in the Arab population. There had been numerous commissions of investigation and innumerable reports, all recommending against the establishment of a State of Israel.

Now we could all see what had happened. He did not wish, he said, to dwell upon things of the past, but some appreciation of what had happened to the Palestinian Arabs was essential to any understanding of the problem today. He emphasized that he was a refugee from what is now Israel. He had lost a home in Jaffa and a home in Jerusalem. When he was in office he lived on his salary. When he was out of office he lived on the charity of his relations. Jordan, the Minister said, wished to be on friendly terms with all neighboring states. Jordan was not a member of the United Nations but Jordan wished to see United Nations a strong organization whose just dictates would be carried out. Jordan was on friendly terms with the United States and Great Britain and had a special relationship to the latter. It intended to recognize its obligations to Great Britain. It was also a member of the Arab League and its interests were becoming increasingly identified with those of the States members of the League.

While Jordan was anxious for peace, there were numerous and real injustices which had been perpetrated upon the Arabs in the past and until steps were taken to right those wrongs he did not see how peace between Israel and the Arabs was possible. He then said that there was no use in discussing the Arab attitude in the past - the fact, for instance, that the Arabs of Palestine had opposed the

partition

partition scheme of 1937, or the partition scheme of 1947. They had their reasons at the time. He did not wish to be intransigent nor did his Government, nor to take any stand which would preclude peace. He felt, however, that Jordan must stand with the other States of the League and must demand the implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine, with particular reference to the 1947 resolution.

Dr. Khalidy said he thought Mr. Stassen should know the communist situation throughout the country. Jordan was against communism. Jordan put people into jail for being Communists. He, Khalidy, and people like him hated communism. In Israel, on the other hand, you had a strong legally recognized Communist Party.

Arabs of all classes, however, were losing faith in the United States and Great Britain in spite of the ties created by such institutions as the American University of Beirut. Persons spoiling in the refugee camps were receptive to anything which promised change. They had lost all hope and were desperate. These unfortunate people would welcome a devastating war and, according to Dr. Khalidy, would not care if 400,000,000 persons were killed by atom bombs. He stressed the urgency of doing something for the refugees now.

Mr. Stassen thanked Dr. Khalidy for his frank and interesting exposition of his views. He explained again that the Secretary and he were fact-finding and that they planned, upon return to the United States, to weigh carefully all the evidence they had gathered in order to produce an enlightened American policy for this area of the world. The important thing was not to look to the injustices of the past, but to try to find a way to move forward constructively at present.

Mr. Byroade then said that, with permission, he should like to ask the Minister a question. He wished to take advantage of the moment, he said, to find out something which had been on his mind for some time. He then asked Dr. Khalidy as a refugee how he explained the fact that according to his, Byroade's, information there seemed to be divergent views among the refugees themselves with regard to the solution of the refugee problem. Dr. Khalidy replied that he felt that he could easily answer the question. There were two classes of refugees - the well-to-do landowners and the poor fellahin and townspeople. The former were represented by such persons as his good friend and colleague in medicine, Dr. Tannous, now of Beirut. It was natural, therefore, that there should exist divergent views on the subject.

Conversation then came to an end as the Secretary's visit with the Prime Minister had terminated and the Foreign Minister was awaiting the Secretary's arrival.